

Recommendation 2153 (2019)¹

Role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly: main challenges for the future

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2277 \(2019\)](#) “Role and mission of the Assembly: main challenges for the future” and notes that the Council of Europe, set up seventy years ago to achieve a greater unity among its member States on the basis of common values and principles, is today in a deep political and financial crisis. It is confronted with many challenges which seriously threaten the effectiveness of its statutory organs and of its mechanisms and instruments, and thus ultimately the statutory aims of the Organisation.
2. To face these challenges, promote security in Europe, reinvigorate trust in the Council of Europe and among its member States, and ensure the future of the Organisation, the Assembly calls on all member States to reaffirm their commitment to the ideal of European unity and the values and principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; to support and further strengthen the Council of Europe as a unique pan-European organisation which upholds these values for the benefit of European citizens; and to consider all available options to ensure the political relevance and financial sustainability of the Organisation so as to avoid seriously undermining its activities and thereby its effectiveness. It also encourages in this respect ongoing discussions with the European Union about the possibility of the latter making a non-earmarked contribution to the Council of Europe’s work on the rule of law.
3. Considering that Council of Europe membership must imply an obligation of all member States to participate in both statutory organs, the Assembly calls on the Russian Federation, in accordance with its statutory obligations, to appoint a delegation to the Assembly and to resume obligatory payment of its contribution to the Organisation’s budget, failure of which may lead to the suspension of its representation rights in both statutory organs, should the Committee of Ministers decide to apply Article 9 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1).
4. The Assembly calls for intensified dialogue among all actors concerned in order to preserve the pan-European mission of the Council of Europe and avoid a situation in which the biggest member State would be asked to, or would choose to, leave the Organisation with all the geopolitical implications and concrete consequences for Russian citizens this would have. It welcomes in this respect the commitment and efforts made by the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.
5. On the basis also of the findings of the Ad hoc Committee of its Bureau on the role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly, which underlined the need to step up political dialogue between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, while respecting each other’s prerogatives, the Assembly:
 - 5.1. welcomes the fact that contacts and dialogue with the Committee of Ministers have significantly intensified recently, at different levels and in different formats;

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2019 (15th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14863](#), Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox; [Doc. 14867](#), opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Mart van de Ven). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2019 (15th Sitting).



5.2. calls on the Committee of Ministers to ensure that its replies to Assembly recommendations address fully and substantially all issues raised and proposes to revive the practice of regular exchanges of views between Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Groups and Assembly rapporteurs and between Assembly committees and Chairpersons of Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Groups or intergovernmental experts during the drafting process of new Council of Europe conventions;

5.3. referring to its [Recommendation 1999 \(2012\)](#) on follow-up by the Committee of Ministers to the work of the Parliamentary Assembly, reiterates the call it made to the Chairs of the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Groups and working parties to maintain regular working relations with the Assembly's committee chairs, rapporteurs and general rapporteurs operating in the relevant areas. A steady practice of holding an annual meeting between a general rapporteur and the relevant rapporteur group could be introduced;

5.4. referring also to its [Resolution 2186 \(2017\)](#) on the call for a Council of Europe summit to reaffirm European unity and to defend and promote democratic security in Europe, as well as to the 1998 Committee of Wise Persons Final Report to the Committee of Ministers, notes that there is an urgent need to develop synergies and provide for joint action by the two statutory organs in order to strengthen the Organisation's ability to react more effectively in situations where a member State violates its statutory obligations or does not respect the fundamental principles and values upheld by the Council of Europe;

5.5. asks the Committee of Ministers to consider its proposal to put in place, in such situations, in addition, a joint response procedure which could be triggered by either the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers or the Secretary General and in which all three of them would participate; this joint procedure could consist of a step-by-step process, starting with the notification of the member State concerned and including a number of concrete and well-defined steps, such as co-ordinated dialogue with the State concerned, the setting-up of a special monitoring procedure enhanced by a joint task force, the publication of a public statement and ultimately the decision to act under Articles 7, 8 or 9 of the Statute; a strict time frame would have to be fixed for each step by common agreement of the three parties; this joint procedure would ensure enhanced legitimacy, credibility, impact, relevance and synergy of the measures to be taken, both regarding the member State concerned and within the Organisation, without prejudice to each organ's existing separate powers and responsibilities; political action could also be combined, where appropriate, with technical support to the State concerned;

5.6. with respect to member States' contributions, asks the Committee of Ministers to consult the Assembly by means of an ad hoc urgent procedure if and when a member State has not made its due contribution to the budget for a period in excess of six months;

5.7. calls for stronger and more structured co-ordination between the monitoring activities of the two statutory organs, the Secretary General and the Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as of the various specialised monitoring and advisory bodies and mechanisms of the Organisation, without prejudice to their independence.